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THE EIGHTH SIN

C. D. MORLEY

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THE EIGHTH SIN

BY

C. D. MORLEY

"There is no greater Sin after the seven deadly than to flatter oneself into an idea of being a great Poet." *Letters of John Keats.*

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ONE must have an excuse. The only one I can offer is that many of these verses have already been refused (with charming tact) by reputable journals. According to the canons of one whose opinion I much value in these matters, that makes them all the more worthy of publication.

I wish I might include a poem by Lord Byron, which I passed off on this same critic as one of my own. He was gracious enough to remark, "Not bad for a beginner!" May he be as lenient towards these!

The publishers of the *Isis* and the *Varsity* have kindly allowed me to reprint some verses which they chaperoned in the first instance.

C. D. M.

NEW COLLEGE,
November, 1912.

"TO THE ONLY BEGETTER."

TO you I sing. To you alone
These rhymes in no uncertain tone
A message bring. Let others hint
They are not worth the ink to print—
Of others I am heedless grown.

Chilled by the bookshop's frigid zone
These rhymes in haste to you have flown,
Fleeing the critic's heart of flint
To you they sing.

I have no fear lest you postpone .
Your gentle judgement. I have known
Your gracious favour has no stint,
You'll say (your cheek a rosier tint),
"I like them, for they are his own"—
To you I sing.

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"THE RHYMESTER'S SWITCH."

(A letter to P. H. DODGE, Esq., of Chicago, U.S.A.)

DEAR P. H. D.,

I dare not quote
The lines that once to you I wrote,
Which give this little verse its name—
For they were broad, and prudes exclaim
That broadness has no antidote!

Since we are both in the same boat,
I with my beam, you with your mote,
Ours is the smile, and ours the shame,
Dear P. H. D!

Still, you recall? Then we will gloat
In secret. And this favour note:
To you this booklet gratis came,
No others shall receive the same;
My other friends must pay their groat,
Dear P. H. D!

ARS POETICA.

"Whenever I find myself growing vaporish I rouse myself, wash and put on a clean shirt, brush my hair and clothes, TIE MY SHOE-STRINGS NEATLY, and, in fact, adonize, as if I were going out—then all clean and comfortable, I sit down to write." (*Keats, Letter to his brother George.*)

WHEN the wheels of song are but scantily oiled
And the ballad is tinkered beyond repair,
When the springs of metre are all uncoiled
And your pitiful cupboard of rhymes is bare,
When Pegasus, poor old knock-kneed mare,
Heeds not the spur in her bleeding hide—
What is the remedy? Brush your hair
And see that your shoes are neatly tied!

When the bard has vainly scraped and toiled,
And gazes at last in black despair
On the Muse's fountain muddied and roiled,
Finding no dainty image there
When verse is a bitterness and a snare,
And even your hypocrite friends deride—
Put your feet on the nearest chair
And see that your shoes are neatly tied!

When the poet's pot has bubbled and boiled
And still yields indigestible fare,
When the delicate morsel is wholly spoiled
And such is your rage that you do not care—
Then is the time to be debonair
And full of a pumiced and lavendered pride,
Get out your finest clothes to wear
And see that your shoes are neatly tied !

ENVOY.

Keats is dead and has left no heir,
But his words are balm to the sorely tried :
If you want to write verses rich and rare
See that your shoes are neatly tied !

TO NANCY.

(Who has been alarmed by a Palmist.)

NANCY, you need never be
Torrified by palministry—
I'm sure no reasons for alarm
Are writ upon your dainty palm!

You say that in those mystic lines
The palmist read unpleasant signs
And omens? O, you silly Nancy
To believe in chiromancy!

And why should some fallacious gipsy
Hold your graceful finger-tips? He
Is a fake (I know the seer)
He's only erbing for a beer.

You know the Roman adage that
Palmam qui meruit, ferat!
If holding hands is to be done,
Let *me* be the lucky one!

MINT JULEP NIGHT.

(Gratefully dedicated to GEORGE BENNETT, who has mixed the Mint Julep at New College every First of June for thirty years.)

O LEAVES of mint, O tankard bright,
O green and silver, jocund sight,
O potent spirit, sweet and strong,
This First of June we raise the song—
No turbid British beer to-night!

Come, tilt the flagon, drink aright,
Our gullets tingling with delight—
This is the place where you belong
O leaves of mint!

Drink deep! A fifth or sixth we might
Negotiate ere George takes fright
And bears away the nectar—long
I kiss you, ice-chilled silver. Wrong
To drink? The very dons are tight,
O leaves of mint!

AD VELOCIPEDEM.

Shotover and I are a dauntless pair
(Sing as we struggle against the slope),
For weather be foul or weather be fair
The road is ours and we never despair
(The next bend is the top, I hope!)

From Thames to Tweed, from Rhine to Scheldt
(A rucksack makes a man perspire)
Ride with the joy of the roving Celt,
A bottle of beer beneath your belt
(And plenty of air in your hinder tyre).

And *Shotover* knows that the rarest time
(Sing of our early morning glee)
Comes not when we fidget for futile rhyme,
But after the toiling, dripping climb
(And down the grade the wheel runs free).

TRIER, GERMANY,
August, 1912.

LA BELLE DAME AVEC MERCI.

"Hungry-hearted girl, desperately in love with life, longs for sympathetic friends. Sane, healthy, good fellowship and sincerity. Meet and correspond. Near Glasgow."—*T.P.'s Weekly*.

O HUNGRY heart, whose starving plea
Speaks from the pages of *T.P.*!

I wonder, since your soul is sad,
May an Oxford undergrad
Your wished-for correspondent be?

"*Near Glasgow*"—That 's the tragedy!
That 's why you long for sympathy;
No wonder you cannot be glad,
O hungry heart.

Ey what you say, our tastes agree:
I too have health and sanity,
My teeth are good, my eyes not bad—
I'll send an answer to your ad.
Appease your appetite with me,
O hungry heart!

THE PASSIONATE STUDENT TO HIS JUNIOR BURSAR.

"Come down, O battels, from this giddy height;
What pleasure lives in height? (the student sang.)"

Come tell me, Junior Bursar, do,
How can these items all be true?
I've bob for beer, when I've had none!
My scout must be the lucky one.

You've charged me for desserts in Hall
When I've had no desserts at all;
For when they ask, I always say,
"O take the nasty sweets away."

For baths I'm mulcted two and two
(I'll give up bathing P. D. Q.);
One thing is very plain to me,
I'll soon have no more L. S. D.

To Hall I hardly ever go,
I quaff no drink but H₂ O,
For tea I have a penny bun,
Yet battels come to three pounds one.

If I had Mr. Belloc's ski
I'd make you blush for such a bill ;
It really needs a Balliol scribe
To write a fitting diatribe.

I've said enough : from first to last
I am not an iconoclast,
But (if it will not cause you pain)
I wish you kindly would explain.

THE WEATHERCOCK.

I OFTEN envy the golden cock
Atop St. Mary's spire
What sights there are for him to see
What music to admire—
The rose-red dawns, the chime of bells,
The sunsets fringed with fire.

From his windy vantage does he see
The crumbling walls of grey?
And Isis, through the cloth of green
Stitching her silver way?
Does the scent of Cotswold violets come
From twenty miles away?

Aloft in the cool blue void of night
Does he count the stars? Until
Through the smoke of smouldering dawn he
hears
His brethren on Cumnor Hill
Hailing the flames of coming day
With voices clear and shrill?

Alas, he neither hears nor sees
His gilded eyes are blind
And he must always face the breeze
Nor ever look behind—
If the wind be east, though the sun set red
He may not even turn his head!

A TREACLE TART.

To A. S.

(Vice-President of the *Society for the Propagation of Treacle-Tart.*)

A TREACLE tart? You ask my aid?
Six ounces flour first persuade
Into a pipkin, pan or pot;
A little baking-powder—not
Too much; two ounces, nicely weighed,
Of lard and butter (finest grade).
With these and water paste is made:
Your hands to mix the gods allot
A treacle tart.

Roll out with bread-crumbs lightly sprayed,
Then treacie generously laid
And scalloped edges not forgot.
An oven moderately hot.
With these instructions well obeyed
There stands before your eyes displayed,
A treacle tart!

TWILIGHT.

SOMEONE has lit the lamp, and hung
The house with curtains of cool blue,
Someone (I cannot tell you who)
Has put bright candles all among
Our empty rooms. Since we are young
For keeping house, and only two,
Someone has lit the lamp, and hung
The house with curtains of cool blue.

Our lamp, the moon so deftly swung
Aloft; the stars our candles new;
Our housekeeper? I have no clue
I only know what I have sung—
Someone has lit the lamp, and hung
The house with curtains of cool blue.

TO PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS.

DEAR Peter, on your tree of bronze
Where children feed the ducks and swans,
Dear Peter, play a tune—don't wait
Till big policemen shut the gate
And leave you lonely—blow, O blow
The music that the children know.

Dear Peter, you need have no fear
Lest grown-up folks should overhear—
Too grave and busy for such glee
They will not heed your minstrelsy.
Your pipe is at your lips— please blow
For we are waiting here below.

The birds and fairies in the park
Can hear you piping after dark,
But we must hear you now, you see,
Before Nurse takes us home to tea.
I think she's coming . . . Do just blow
One *tiny* tune before we go!

OLD QUAKER WOOD.

(To C. W. S., the Goblin-Woodcutter.)

OLD Quaker wood burns sweet and slow
And sinks into a crimson glow.

The log, grown tough with many days
The fiery fingers long gainsays
And then—how grey the ash below!

Green were your leaves of long ago,
Now brighter blossoms round you grow
The golden foliage of the blaze
Old Quaker wood!

And even in your final throe
The small blue flame is whispering low
In confidential Quaker phrase
"Thee must be brave!" The log obeys
For any (as we all well know)
Old Quaker would!

Old Jordans Hostel.

FOR A NINETEENTH BIRTHDAY.

(April 13, 1912.)

NINETEEN lovely years are hers
As the spring comes flooding in
And April's magic is akin
To that dear wistfulness which blurs
Her eyes when Love too deeply stirs
Her heart; and when the flowers begin
Nineteen lovely years are hers
As the spring comes flooding in.

Perfect girlhood still confers
Its grace upon her; but within
Like strains from a far violin
Her soul hears gentler messengers,
For April-womanhood is hers
As the spring comes flooding in.

BALLADE OF SHOP-WINDOWS IN THE HIGH.

LET some sing the joys of our rivers,
The Isis (or Thames) and the Cher,
Let some swot for Mods and for Divvers
Or loaf at the Clarendon bar,
These pleasures I rate below par
For another I pass them all by—
More seductive than all of them are
The windows that shine in the High.

Let others (more riotous livers)
Frequent the Cadena bazaar,
Let East Oxford empty her quivers
At the heart of the young Lochinvar—
My pastime to view from afar
Many things I would willingly buy
(Did not £ s. d. shortage debar)
In the windows that shine in the High.

There are fur coats (for those that have shivers)
Pictures, bric-à-brac, jams by the jar,
Wines, whiskeys and cordials for givers
Of binges, and waters from Spa;

The fatal-to-Freshmen cigar
And books on Anthróphagi
(I am sorry that accent to mar)
In the windows that shine in the High.

ENVOY.

But Fresher ! unless your Papa
Will pay bills without batting an eye
I would bid you be wary (*Seluh !*)
Of the windows that shine in the High.

OUR HOUSE.

It should be yours, if I could build
The quaint old dwelling I desire,
With books and pictures bravely filled
And chairs beside an open fire
White-panelled rooms with candles lit—
I lie awake to think of it!

A dial for the sunny hours,
A garden of old-fashioned flowers—
Sav marigolds and lavender
And mignonette and fever-few,
And Judas tree and maiden-hair
And candytuft and thyme and rue—
All these for you to wander in.

A Chinese carp (called *Mandarin*!)
Waving a sluggish silver fin
Deep in the moat: so tame he comes
To lip your fingers offering crumbs.
Tall chimneys, like long listening ears,
White shutters, ivy green and thick,
And walls of ruddy Tudor brick
Grown mellow with the passing years.

And windows with small leaded panes,
Broad window-seats for when it rains.
A big blue bowl of pot-pourri
And—yes, a Spanish chestnut-tree
To coin the autumn's minted gold.
A summer-house for drinking tea—
All these (just think !) for you and me.

A staircase of the old black wood
Cut in the days of Robin Hood,
And banisters worn smooth as glass
Down which your hand will lightly pass.
A piano with dear yellow keys
For wistful twilight melodies
And dusty bottles in a bin—
All these for you to revel in !

But when ? Ah well, until that time
We'll habit in this house of rhyme !

BALLADE OF MARCH.

WHEN the fitful sun has beckoned the crocus
Up from the womb of the chill wet mould,
And the sounds and scents of spring provoke us
From cloisters grey and damp and old,
When the fleeces of heaven are all unrolled
And windy March gives promise of June
And the world is blue and green and gold—
Then hey for a bicycling afternoon !

When the quickening blood brings into focus
All in our souls that is gay and bold
Away from the dons and their hocus-pocus
Ride where the Thames runs clean and cold
Under Swinford Bridge or by Cumnor wold—
On with the magical seven-league shoon !
Colour and fragrance manifold
Are ours on a bicycling afternoon.

And, if the rain *does* fall and soak us
(What did Chaucer mean when he told
Of the *drought of March* ! Was he trying to joke
us ?)
A wetting can be at an inn consoled.

Before our wheels there lies unrolled
A land of meadows and streams—too soon
We will lose it: Come, would you live blind-
fold?
Come for a bicycling afternoon!

ENVOY.

O Tutors, the blinding sun awoke us
From our pipes, our papers, our bookish
swoon—
And, lest our learning should rise and choke us
We went for a bicycling afternoon!

THE EDITOR REGRETS.

"The Editor regrets that he is reluctantly compelled to return the enclosed MS."—The Editor of *The English Review*.

"THE Editor regrets that he
Cannot accept your poetry"—

 This does not mean (observe his tact!)

 A lack of merit, for in fact

He sends it back "reluctantly."

Many a hopeful *jeu d'esprit*

I post (enclosing stamps) with glee.

 What happens? Well, to be exact,

 "The Editor regrets."

O journals of democracy,

Spectator, *Punch*, or *P. M. G.*

 I think your Editors are cracked.

 I think they all have cataract—

Hullo! A letter here for me?

O Lord! The same hypocrisy—

 "The Editor regrets."

A SONG OF THE STEERAGE.

SING a song of steerage, for that's the place to be,
Seven guld will do it, and seven days at sea,

Seven grey December days, keeping near the
rall—

And all the little candles are waiting on the tree!

Seven days of porridge, and cabbages, and pork,
Seven days of steerage-deck, swinging as you
walk,

And then the dark blue water is turning yellow-
brown

There's the dear old Statue--and it's Christmas
in New York!

You who cross the Channel from Dover to Calais,
You who dress for dinner and go first-class all
the way,

I wonder will you ever know the thrill that I
shall feel

When the stately old *Caronia* goes rolling up the
Bay!

It's a greasy queasy business, a-travelling in the
third

Where the meat is mostly horses and the milk is
chiefly curd,

But it's better to go steerage than not to go at
all—

You'll be jolly glad you did it, I give my plighted
word.

Then sing a song of steerage, for that's the place
to be

Seven quid will do it, and seven days at sea

Seven grey December days, keeping near the
rail—

And over in America there's Someone waits for
me!

ON READING SOME TESTIMONIALS.

(Dedicated to all Rhodes Scholars.)

My testimonial-writers fill

(Intentionally inexact)

The fauteuils nearest to the grill—

The hottest seats are always packed.

Intentionally inexact

They roast and crackle on the griddle,

The hottest seats are always packed

The frying fat sings like a fiddle.

They roast and crackle on the griddle

They wrote me better than I am,

The frying fat sings like a fiddle

I do not give a single d——n.

They wrote me better than I am

Thus making me a good deal worse,

They did not give a single d——n

(Except when needed for the verse)

Thus making me a good deal worse

They disappoint the bright-eyed dons

Except when needed for the verse

They cannot tell their geese from swans.

They disappoint the bright-eyed dons
Who beamed with glee in hopes to find
(They cannot tell their geese from swans)
The "sterling heart," the "radiant mind."

They beamed with glee in hopes to find—
But all aghast in vain they seek
The "sterling heart," the "radiant mind"
Whereof my testimonials speak.

All aghast in vain they seek,
And finding I am not the sort
Whereof my testimonials speak
The dons have gone back to their port.

Finding I am not the sort,
Their kindly zeal availing not,
The dons have gone back to their port
Feeling, perhaps, a trifle hot.

Their kindly zeal availing not
The fauteuils nearest to the grill
(Feeling, perhaps, a trifle hot)
My testimonial-writers fill.

THE EXILE AND THE ROCK LIMPET.

(Suggested by Turner's painting at the Tate Gallery, thus described in the catalogue: *Blood-red sunset reflected in a shallow tidal pool on the shore at St. Helena; Napoleon stands, with arms folded, looking at the limpet.*)

THE dying Day lies bleeding in the west,
Stanching his ebbing anguish in the cool
Blue bosom of the Night . . .

And by the salty island shore a pool,
A shallow tidal pool, his blood reflects,
Mirrors the crimson . . .

Alone and peaceful to her evening meal
The tiny limpet goes, perchance reviewing
In the chaste closets of her virgin mind
The unambitious current of her thoughts,
Her calm desires; and from her fluted shell
She shyly looks about, bearing her eyes
Upon retractile stalks; with sheepish joy
Observes one of her kindred gastropods,
Significantly beckon from afar.

O gentle cochlea! Unwitting thou
That on the rocky promont near at hand
There stands with folded arms, with brow con-
tort,

The Emperor . . . Ah ! does he meditate
A vesper dish of plaintive homely snails
Seethed in the Corsican white wine he loves ?
No, harmless mollusc, no such carnal wish.
For lo, he thinks with melancholy pangs
How much more pleasant is thy fate than his ;
No ferment of regrets, no shattered hopes,
No griefs of exile (lo, thy modest home
Is ever with thee)—thus, in short, he broods.
The Emperor would gladly interchange
His lot with thine, O unambitious snail . . .
(*Cetera desunt*).

RUDYARD KIPLING *moralizes* :—

*Fortune's coin is fickle : she spins both heads and
tails.*

Even in your glory forbear to sneer at snails !

TO VENUS IN THE ASHMOLEAN.

DEAR Goddess, in your quiet eyes
I long have seen the dumb reproof,
But surely charity denies
That you should longer hold aloof.
Dear Goddess, freely I confess—
Great pardon, of your graciousness.

THE CONFESSION.

An argument arose between us
Touching the perfect waist of Venus.
My friend (a very subtle Scot)
Said *Thirty-three. I'm sure it's not*
Was my retort. *As I'm alive*
I'll guarantee it's thirty-five.
Base men had let the matter rest—
But we—we put it to the test.
We took a measured length of twine
And came within the sacred shrine.
The Goddess stood, unrobed and stately—
Her purity abashed us greatly—

But while the captious Scot looked out
For keepers strolling round about
I tiptoed up. With horrid qualms
Encircled her with profane arms
And (inly shuddering) then I placed
Unhallowed fingers on her waist,
And her whom I had long adored
I girdled with the impious cord.
O had there been an ancient Greek
To see the faint flush on her cheek
He would have slain me on the spot.

Then said my friend (irreverent Scot)
What do you make it? Thirty-three?
But Venus' eyes were fixed on me
And in my innate chivalry
I could not tell the brutal truth,
(Her girth was thirty-five in sooth)
Your guess was wrong, and so was mine
Quoth I. *Her waist is twenty-nine.*

And as we hurried down the aisle
Her eyes pursued me with a smile.
How glad we were no-one had seen us
Measuring the waist of Venus.

Dear Goddess, freely I confess
And pray your charity divine,
Surely it makes my guilt the less
Because I called it twenty-nine ?
So at my sin you will connive . . .
You know yourself its thirty-five !

WHITE MAGIC.

*World, if her soul is sad to-day
Sain it with blue and green and grey.*

Sain it with blue : if she would cry
Show her the stainless vault of sky,
The rich blue drapery of the seas
A bending robe across God's knees.

Sain it with green : if tears o'erwhelm
Rock her soul in the windy elm,
Stanch it with the cool green leaves,
Show her our English grass if she grieves.

Sain it with grey : a cure for pain
Is to weave her a cobweb-scarf of rain,
And a soft grey cloak of shadows dim—
Then let her smile, and think of him.

*World, if her soul is sad to-day
Sain it with blue and green and grey.*

PALLADE OF A CHANGE OF ABODE.

(Dedicated to Mr. WENTWORTH CROKE, Manager of
the Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith.)

ROMANCE has fled from Leicester Square
To dwell with simpler-hearted folk,
She flies in horror and despair
To seek suburban hearts of oak,
Her high-priest now is Wentworth Croke
Her ancient fanes are but a myth.
Come then (and bring your pipe to smoke)
Where she resides in Hammersmith.

The *Empire* is the tawdry lair
Of juggling Jew and rancid joke,
Pink legs, dress-shirted fools astare
And humour ground beneath the yoke—
Come where Romance may still invoke
Her own congenial kin and kith
Come, apt for joy or sobs that choke,
Where she resides in Hammersmith.

For she has found true lovers there
Who shudder lest her spell be broke

She caught them in her subtle snare
And gathered them beneath her cloak.
They hissed the villain when he spoke
Adored the hero large of lith—
What shining eyes when they awoke
Where she resides in Hammersmith!

ENVOY.

Princess! Two lines my song declare
This is the marrow and the pith:
Romance has fled from Leicester Square
And now resides in Hammersmith.

BALLADE OF MR. PEPYS.

"Among the others pretty Mrs. Margaret, who indeed is a very pretty lady; and, though by my vow it costs me 12d. a kiss, yet I did adventure upon a couple."—*Pepys' Diary*, Feb. 3, 1665.

Good Mr. Peeps or Peps or Pips
 (However he should be yeleft),
Clerk of the King's Bureau of Shlps,
 A very spicy journal kept,
He knew a lemon from a peach,
 And, among other things, he knew
When kisses are a shilling each
 We should adventure on a few!

He was a connoisseur of lips,
 And though I cannot quite accept
Some of his rather wady tips
 (I grant he often overstepped
The bounds of taste) — still he can teach
 Mnagogynists a thing or two—
When kisses are a shilling each
 We should adventure on a few!

He drank the wine of life by sips,
He roundly ate and soundly slept,
His spirits suffered no eclipse,
But Lord! how sore he would have wept
To see his private linen bleach
And flutter in the public view . . .
Well, kisses are a shilling each,
Let us adventure on a few!

ENVOY.

O Ballad-monger, I beseech,
Consider his advice anew
When kisses are a shilling each
Why not adventure on a few?

TO R. L. S.

DEAR R. L. S., whose books each night
We used to read by candle-light,
 'These many years your body lies
 Under the blue Samoan skies,
But still your words ring warm and bright.
In these poor rhymes, however slight,
I fain would tell you, if I might,
 Your words brought gladness to *her* eyes,
 Dear R. L. S.

The magic you knew how to write
Evoked her laughter of delight:
 With gratitude which rhyme denotes
 Full utterance do not despise —
To You, to Her, I this indite,
 Dear R. L. S.

ALL LOVELY THINGS.

ALL lovely things conspire to greet
My lady: daisies at her feet
Sprang white and wistfully implored
Her plucking; and with one accord
The sunsets for her smile compete.

The stars, in many a silver fleet,
Set sail each night in hopes to meet
Her eyes, that graciously reward
All lovely things.

All gay and gentle thoughts entreat
Her favour and approval sweet
All sorrow, when to her outpoured,
Is by her sympathy restored:
She finishes and makes complete
All lovely things.

FROM ARTHUR'S SEAT.

"There are no stars like the Edinburgh street-lamps."—*R. L. S.*

From Arthur's Seat there lies displayed
The city in her dim brocade,
 And stitching it with useful stars
The unseen tailors ply their trade.

The blue of dusk deeps into night
Then flash the leaping seams of light,
 By magic needlework there runs
The gleaming pattern, golden-bright.

Across and over, up and down
The sombre garments of the town
 Swift hands are hemming threads of gold,
And sewing jewels on her gown.

Master, your town of long ago
Still wears those yellow stars. And lo
 The brightest-shining of them all
Is by the house in Heriot Row!

SONG.

O CHERRY-TREE, let slip your petals bright

A whirling flight

Of April snow,

O let them eddy in the windy height

Then drift upon the grass below.

O cool blue harbours of twilight

Unmoor your galleons white

And trim their spars

Come plunging through the purple night

The great armada of the stars.

TO JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH.

(In gratitude for her illustrations of *A Child's Garden of Verses*.)

HE would have said, with radiant face,
"Dear Lady, in some fairy place
Some garden where (without a nurse)
They played their shadowy games in verse,
You must have met my bairns alone
And smiled, and took them for your own.

"They were more ragged then, perhaps,
They did not know the joy of laps,
A very lonely life they led
They never had been tucked in bed.
In spite of all their merry laughter
They badly needed looking after!

"These children of my wistful dreams
The magic of your brush now seems
To bring to life—I recognise
The golden heads, the dark brown eyes,
The dainty frocks, the slim bare legs
And all that love-of-children begs.

*"The bairns are yours as much as mine
And so to you I now resign
A half of all that fund of glee
That they have always brought to me.
But on one thing they will insist—
They never sleep till they've been kissed !
P.S.—I wrote with grateful joy
You've made the oldest one a boy !"*

Such words as these, but with more grace,
He would have said.

TRINOCTIO ABESSE.

THREE nights in town! Ah Lady Bess,
Dean, Tutor. Warden—all say yes—
We'll dine to-night in Leicester Square;
Just think—to-night!—and I'll be there
By six—the Paddington Express.

And you will say (O, I can guess
Just how) *Dear Mr. Cleverness,*
From all your studies, think, to spare
Three nights in town!

The theatre? I like that less
Than fireside talk, I must confess,
For there are questions . . . you will wear
A scarlet ribbon in your hair?
O think, from Oxford's grim duress
Three nights in town!

ROBIN HERRICK IN EIGHTS WEEK.

WHEN in a punt my Julia goes
She wields the pole and chastely shows
Her dainty ankles—I repose.

And as she poles she smiling thinks
“I’m glad I wore the silk ones—pink’s
My colour”—O the crafty minx!

I, meditating on her charms,
Her supple grace, her bare brown arms . . .
Suddenly, smitten with alarms

I feel a scratch. O where are we?
Under the spiky hawthorn tree,
Whither her punting taketh me!

THE BLUE TREE.

NEW College men, wherever they be,
East or West or over the sea,
Never forget the bright blue tree—

O to remember, O to recall

The dear blue tree by the garden-wall !

Few of its lovers know its name,
But they remember it just the same,
Think of it glowing, a pale blue flame
By the bastion in the old grey wall—

All the world over, still they recall

The sweet blue tree by the garden-wall.

New College men, though far away,
Have never forgotten the red red may
Or the cherry-tree tossing its petals away,
Or the chestnut walk, or the limes so tall—

Dear are all these, but dearest of all

The sweet blue tree by the garden-wall.

RONDEL.

(After Charles d'Orléans.)

THE world has cast her habiting
Of wind, of frost, of cold grey rain ;
In sunny robes of braver grain
She dons the broidery of Spring.
And every tiny living thing
In his own way declares amain :
"The world has cast her habiting
Of wind, of frost, of cold grey rain."

And streams and brooks the tidings bring
Wearing their liveries again
Of gold and silver ; Winter slain,
April may laugh aloud, and sing :
"The world has cast her habiting
Of wind, of frost, of cold grey rain."

BALLADE OF SONGS UNSUNG.

I MEANT to write some other verse
Some better, and some vastly worse.
I meant to write, and never did,
And now the coming Schools forbid.
I'll mention what I hoped to sing
To guard against all trespassing.

One on the Franco-Prussian War
(It never had been done before)
But now, I render thanks to Allah,
It has been done by P. G - - d - ll - .

I had a very real wish
To write a trifling thing on fish
It was *The Goldfish at the Tate* - -
That one I fear will have to wait.

A Ballad of the Law Prelim.
(That one was rather like a hymn.)
Some musings that I had to burn
For being too like Laurence Sterne,
These would have done exceeding well
As a racy villanelle.

A sonnet *To a Lady's Skull*
Now Used for My Tobacco Ash
Would have been wistful-fanciful
And rich in Oriental pash.
The *Charters* quaintly called *Select*
I hoped in metre to dissect ;
Also (somewhat analogous)
To render the *Dialogus*
(You know it ?) *de Scaccario*
And put my tutor in a glow.
The University Statutes
Afford some still ungarnered fruits—
In featly-footed *terza-rima*
They'd please the dilettante dreamer.

Then there was something rather coarser,
A fragment in the vein of Chaucer,
You would have dubbed the thing *robust*—
I'll try it yet, I really must . . .

But most of all my soul regrets
My still unwritten triolets.

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